APRIL
5

BEMUSING MAGAZINE COMIC MART SPECIAL

BIGGER 10P BETTER

GIANT SIZE SPIDER MAN
MARVEL COMICS GROUP.
5 JULY
50¢
68 BIG PAGES
GIANT-SIZE SPIDER-MAN AND THE MAN-THING
THE DAY YOU DEFY THE LIZARD MEN-HEAD... IS THE DAY YOU DIE!
SLAY HIM MY PETS!
NEW! IT'S MUCK MONSTER VS REPTILE LORD AND SPIDEY IS CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE!
LURKER IN THE SWAMP!

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KIRBY TO RETURN TO MARVEL, STAN LEE ANNOUNCES AT THE MARVEL CON--SEE PAGE THREE

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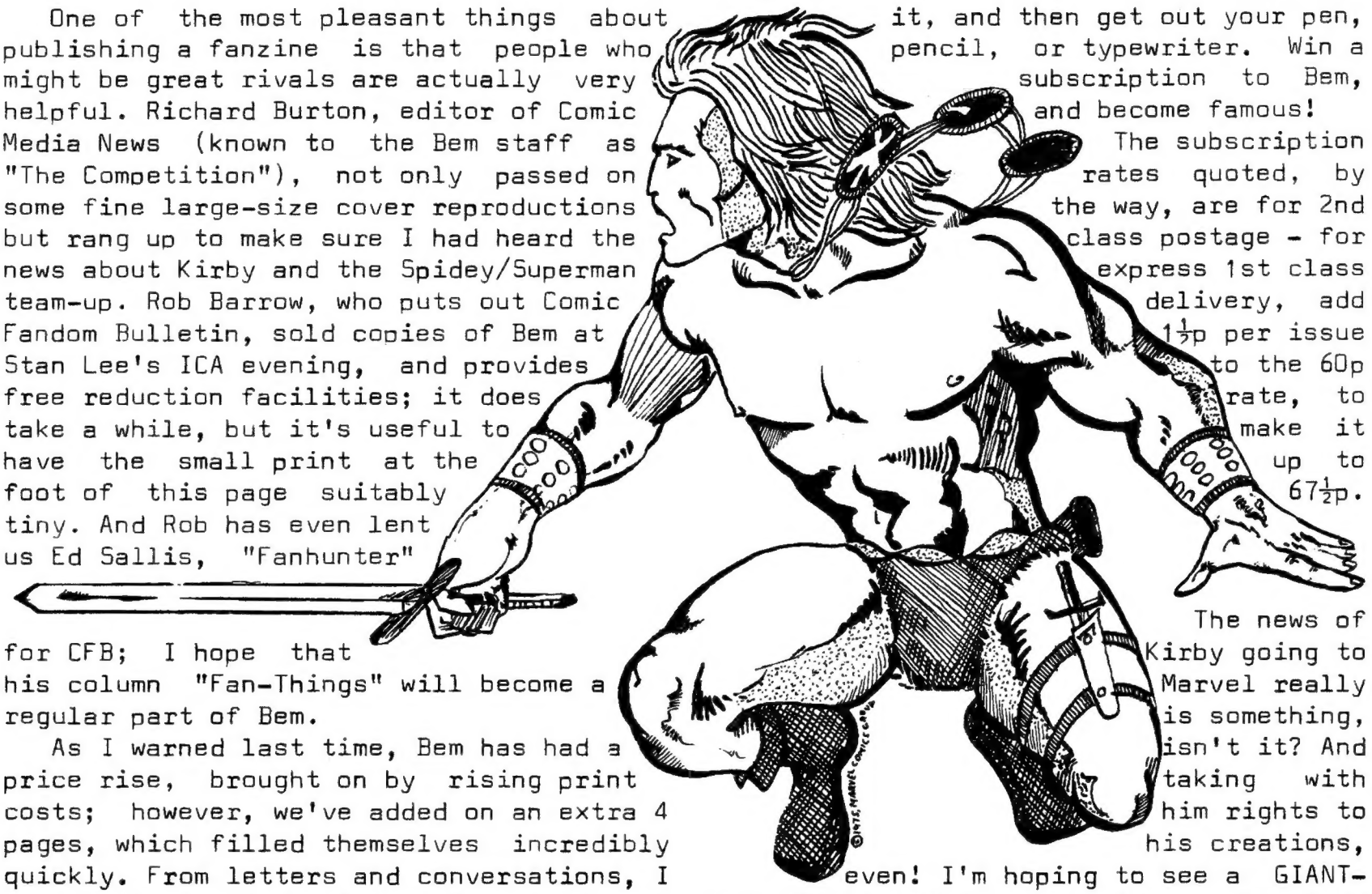
TOMB OF DRACULA
MARVEL COMICS GROUP.
25¢ 14 JULY
THE TOMB OF DRACULA
BE PATIENT MEN WITHIN MOMENTS THAT MADMAN WILL WALK RIGHT INTO OUR TRAP!
YOU'RE JUST IN TIME FOR... BLOODY SHOWDOWN!

BEMUSINGS



One of the most pleasant things about publishing a fanzine is that people who might be great rivals are actually very helpful. Richard Burton, editor of Comic Media News (known to the Bem staff as "The Competition"), not only passed on some fine large-size cover reproductions but rang up to make sure I had heard the news about Kirby and the Spidey/Superman team-up. Rob Barrow, who puts out Comic Fandom Bulletin, sold copies of Bem at Stan Lee's ICA evening, and provides free reduction facilities; it does take a while, but it's useful to have the small print at the foot of this page suitably tiny. And Rob has even lent us Ed Sallis, "Fanhunter" for CFB; I hope that his column "Fan-Things" will become a regular part of Bem.

As I warned last time, Bem has had a price rise, brought on by rising print costs; however, we've added on an extra 4 pages, which filled themselves incredibly quickly. From letters and conversations, I have tried to find what readers want; more news (3 pages this time) and cover repros (19, coincidentally the same number as the current CM News prints) for a start, plus shorter reviews of mainly more available comics. Tale-Enders as before, page four funnies, a big two-page lettercol - I hope that I'm getting the mixture right for an interesting and informative regular zine. But if you've got any suggestions for ways to improve Bem, please let me know.

One innovation this time is on page 11; a contest to find new reviewers of comics. Read the rules there, have a think about it, and then get out your pen, pencil, or typewriter. Win a subscription to Bem, and become famous!

The subscription rates quoted, by the way, are for 2nd class postage - for express 1st class delivery, add $1\frac{1}{2}$p per issue to the 60p rate, to make it up to $67\frac{1}{2}$p.

The news of Kirby going to Marvel really is something, isn't it? And taking with him rights to his creations, even! I'm hoping to see a GIANT-SIZE FOURTH WORLD book, with the New Gods continuing--I'm sure the next CM News will contain some surprises for us all.

Thanks for assistance and contributions go to Nigel Edwards and his Mob, Brian D. Berke, Greg Chown (art: pp2,5,12,15), Jonn Hay, Superswipe (art: pp4,8,10,11), Rich Morrissey, Ruan Lanihorne, Richard Burton, TCR, Frank Dobson, Gary Fox, Bram Stokes, subscribers, letter-writers, & Gent Shaw, editor of WORLD OF HORROR, for his kind review of Bem in WoH ≠6 - you'll even find the cover of Bem-3 reproduced on page 59!

Bem-6 should be out in June.

BEMUSING MAGAZINE (Comic Mart Special) is published by the Editor, Martin Lock.
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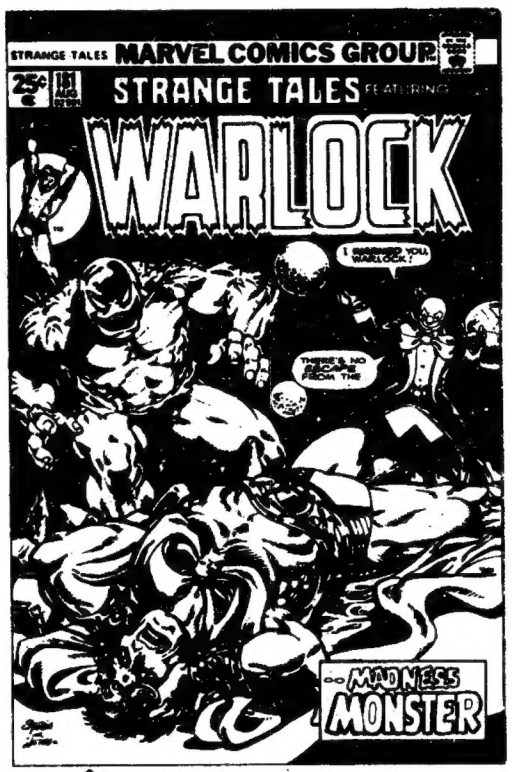
NEWS

MARVEL

KIRBY RETURNS!

On the 24th March, at the Marvel Comic Convention, Mr Stan Lee announced that he and Jack Kirby had agreed that Jack will return to Marvel. Kirby will script his own stories; there will be surprise new books which will be, says Stan, "the greatest thing since Quaker Oats"--also, Roy Thomas and Kirby may collaborate on the Fantastic Four.

In a question and answer session involving Stan, Roy Thomas, Jack, Marv Wolfman, and John Romita, Stan said 2 or 3 books a month, at Jack's own speed, will be the output, and yes he will try and find the time to do a script or two with Jack. Kirby said he would retain the rights to the titles he did while with DC. "Anything I do for Marvel will electrocute you" he went on--Stan corrected this to electrify. Maybe Kirby will continue the Silver Surfer where he left off, said Stan.



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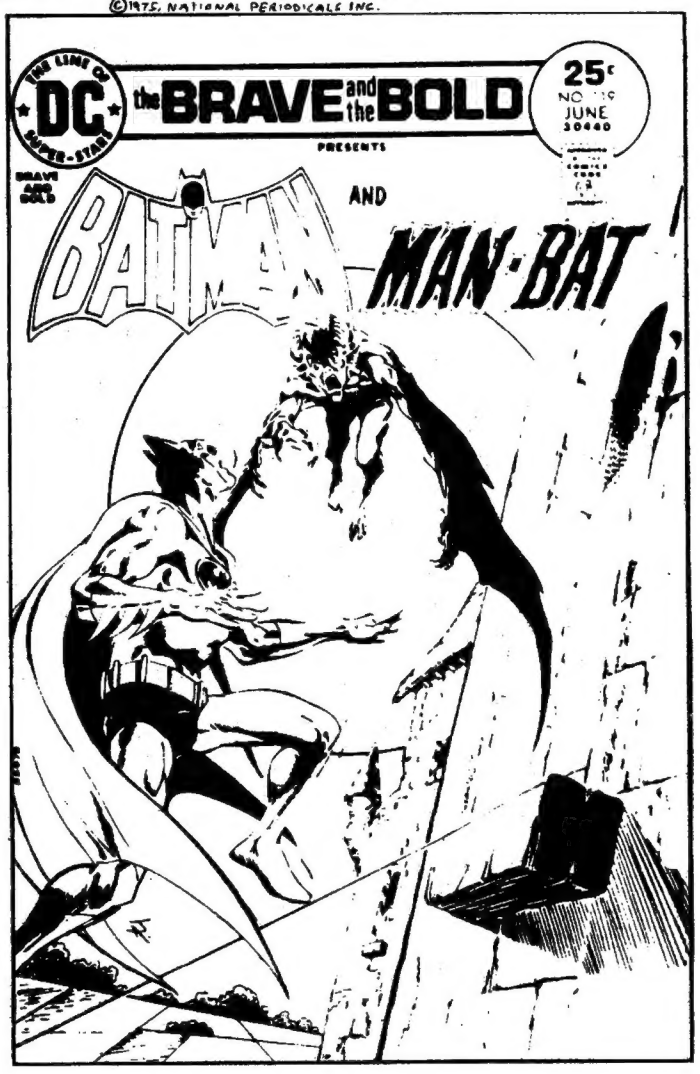
TEAM-UP SUPREME

Lee also told the fans that his agent, who sold his Origins book to Simon and Schuster, contacted Warners (who own National-DC) about making a film starring Spider-Man versus.... Superman! DC said no to a film--but a comic maybe. A contract for

continued page 5...



NATIONAL

CONWAY ARRIVES

Gerry Conway has become an editor for DC; new titles he will handle include MAN-BAT, featuring Batman's foe or friend, and THE ALL-STAR SQUAD, new chronicles of the Justice Society. Also, he will write at least one story for all of the Julius Schwartz-edited books, and collaborate on a project or two with Joe Orlando. Paul Levitz will be Gerry's new assistant editor.

FIRST ISSUE SPECIALS

1 (April) ATLAS by Kirby
2 (May) GREEN TEAM by Simon
3 (June) METAMORPHO
4 (July) Lady Cop
5 (August) MANHUNTER, by Kirby (not the same as Archie Goodwin's version, but instead a completely new man).
6 (Sept) Robin & Batgirl team-up.
7 (Oct) THE CREEPER by Fleischer, Ditko, and Royer.
8 (Nov) THE DINGBATS by Jack Kirby
9 (Dec) THE WARLORD by Mike Grell

After this (and this schedule was announced before Kirby left) are planned "Gorilla City" by Wrightson, and the Green Lantern & Green Arrow team, written by Denny O'Neil.

AND...

"Exciting changes" are planned for HOUSE OF SECRETS. WEIRD WESTERN

continued page 8...

INSTIGATOR: PETE APRIL/INNOVATOR: JACK STRAW/ACTIVATOR: MARTIN LOCK

FATLAS COMICS

INFERIOR ESTRADA STEEL

THE NEARLY NEW HOUSE OF IDEAS!!

JUST 'COS I DEVOUR WOMEN, THAT DOESN'T MAKE ME A BEDDING PLANT, DOES IT?

THIS DAME NEXT TA ME OUGHT TO CHANGE HER UNDERARM DEODORANT!

THIS NEW BRA REALLY WORKS!

GER'EM OFF!!

KEEP OFF THE GRASS

POP!

BOY! THESE FUR Y-FRONTS PLAY HAVOC!

PROPERTY OF HELL'S ANGELS

PAT! PAT!

ME ♥ GIRLS

PENTHOUSE

KULL

ALL THE TIME I GET, "ARE YOU PETE DUEL?

IF LOST, RETURN TO CONAN

GIRDLE CONTROLS

TOUCH!

WELL, WITH A GET-UP LIKE THIS, WHAT'YA EXPECT, DEARIE?

SPLASH!

ONE MORE "KEMO SABY" CRACK, AND IN GOES THE KNIFE!

SWEFRIGS STAINLESS

DIBBER

SUPER-SNEAKS

ALMOST NEW STORIES!

SLIGHTLY NEW CHARACTERS!

~~15~~ ~~17~~ ~~20~~ 21 ACTION PACKED FULL COLOR COMICS

ON SALE NOW-- SO BUY 'EM ALL, OR WE'LL SHOOT AND/OR STAB YOU!

SW

this was signed a few days before the convention -- now all that remains is to agree how, where, and when this can happen. There is no telling how long it will take to work out the final details of such things as billing--there is a possibility that Jack Kirby, who has drawn both characters in his time, may be assigned to draw this book.

(Thanks for most of the above go to our New York Correspondent, Brian D. Berke)

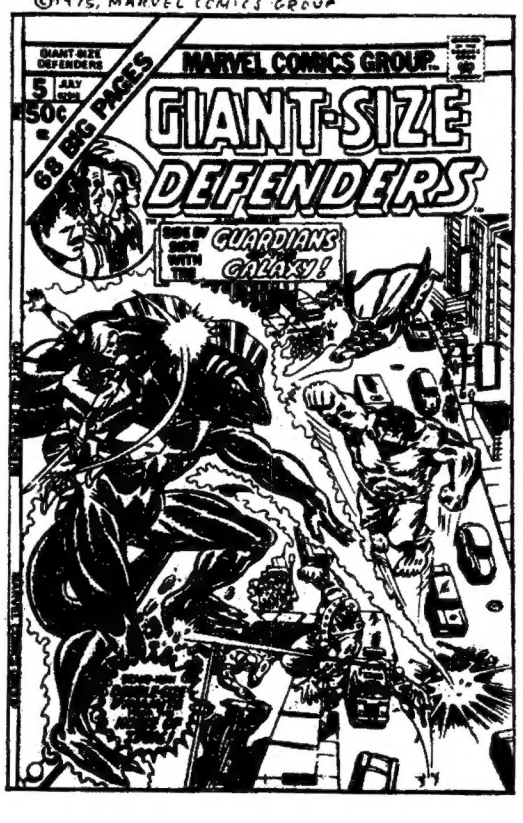
GIANT-SIZE CHANGES

The Giant-Size Dracula, Man-Thing, and Werewolf books are cancelled; they were hurting the sales of their monthly 25 cent titles. Replacing them on the schedules are Giant-Size books for THE INHUMANS, STARHAWK & GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY, and THE CHAMPIONS, a new super-team starring Black Widow, Iceman, Angel, either Power Man or Black Goliath, & Hercules, and written by Tony Isabella. STARHAWK originally was scheduled for the July, 1969 issue of Marvel Super-Heroes, but not published as "sub-standard", although the story appeared in the Marvel-Mania fanzine.

NEW BLACK & WHITES

THOR will be getting his very own b & w magazine, set 2000 years in the past; a back-up feature will star Hercules. The DOC SAVAGE b&w will come out in June (cover-dated Aug) on a bi-monthly schedule.

This summer a special issue of SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN will be released - it will include a section in full colour with a story plotted and drawn by Tim Conrad. Bruce Jones has done a story for KULL AND THE BARBARIANS; an unpublished, Barry Smith KULL tale will be



inked by Tim Conrad, and Esau Cairn, star of the Robert E. Howard interplanetary novel "Almuric", will also appear. probably in the same book.

TEAM CHANGES

With Conway's departure, Marv Wolfman takes over DAREDEVIL, Roy Thomas AVENGERS as Steve Englehart takes over THOR, & Len Wein SPIDER-MAN, MARVEL TEAM-UP, & GIANT-SIZE SPIDER-MAN. Roy Thomas will not take over MARVEL TWO IN ONE, but issue 11 (co-starring Golem), is plotted by him, with Bill Mantlo as scripter. From #12, Tony Isabella takes over; he also inherits CAPTAIN AMERICA from Steve Englehart. Issue 4 of GIANT-SIZE INVADERS will be pencilled by Rich Buckler, and introduces "The Liberty Legion" of Golden Age Timely heroes: Red Raven, Whizzer, Miss America, Blue Diamond, the Patriot, the Thin Man, & Jack Frost.

AND...

SAVAGE TALES will introduce a few new characters soon; Russ Heath is drawing a story by Archie Goodwin for this book. An adaptation by Marv Wolfman & Sonny Trinidad of THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT is in the works--destination unknown.

There will be a DR STRANGE Marvel Treasury Edition, and a Halloween issue featuring the Marvel Monsters.

Stan Lee will write Marvel Origins, Volume II, shortly; the 1976 Calendar, featuring art by Robbins, Kane, Romita, Brunner, Starlin, & Cockrum, is also in preparation.

John David Warner will be writing LIVING MUMMY and also TIGRA; Val Mayerik will leave the Living Mummy strip.

The WIZARD OF OZ series, adapted by Roy Thomas & John Buscema, will apoear in the $1.50 Treasury size.

Don Heck's drawing MORBIUS.

FRANK DOBSON'S NEW BOOKSHOP IS NOW OPEN MONDAY TO SATURDAY!

WEIRD FANTASY BOOKSHOP, 3 LEWISHAM WAY, NEW CROSS, LONDON SE 14.

Yes, we're open Monday to Friday from 11, and on Saturday from 9! A wide selection of buses pass us (we're next door to The Marquis of Granby pub), and we're only two minutes away from New Cross and New Cross Gate stations. Pay us a visit; you'll find some real bargains! We also carry a large range of SF, English comics, and fanzines.

Here's a selection of comics and magazines from our latest list. By post, the MINIMUM order is £2.00; orders over £5.00 are insured. The prices quoted are all POST-FREE; everything listed is in very good to mint condition.

COLLECTORS ITEMS

FIGHT COMICS (Fiction House) ≠51 Aug 1947, nm@£5. Tiger Girl etc.
BOY COMICS (Gleason) ≠76 Apr 1952 vg@£4. Crimebuster etc, including the original IRON JAW.
BIG SHOT (Columbia Comics Group) ≠91 Jul 1948, nm@£3. Skyman etc.
THE FUNNIES (Dell) ≠25 Oct 1938, nm@£8. With Alley Oop, Capt Easy, Scribbly, and many more.
JOE PALOOKA (Harvey) ≠84 Jul 1954 vg @ £3.
JUNGLE COMICS (Fiction House)≠134 Feb 1951, vg @ £5. Kaanga etc.
DAREDEVIL (Gleason) ≠68 Nov 1950, vg @ £4.
FAMOUS FUNNIES (Dell)≠51 Oct 1938 vg @ £8. Buck Rogers etc.
LASSIE (Dell) ≠10 Jan 1953 nm@£2.
LONE RANGER (Dell) ≠88 Oct 1953, vg @ £1
GENE AUTRY (Dell)≠75 May'53 vg@£1

MAGAZINES (ATLAS)

DEVILINA ≠1 @ 50p
THRILLING ADVENTURE ≠1 @ 50p
WEIRD TALES OF THE MACABRE 1 @50p
MOVIE MONSTERS ≠1, 2 @ 50p

COMICS (ATLAS) all @ 10p each

WULF THE BARBARIAN ≠1 PHOENIX 1
POLICE ACTION ≠1 GRIM GHOST ≠1
WESTERN ACTION ≠1 TARANTULA ≠1
SCORPION ≠1 TALES OF EVIL ≠1
PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES ≠1 BRUTE 1
MORLOCK 2001 ≠1 DESTRUCTOR ≠1
SAVAGE COMBAT TALES ≠1 IRON JAW ≠1

MAGAZINES (WARREN)

SPIRIT No.3,4,5,6,7 @ 75p each
EERIE No.48 @ 50p
CREEPY No.54 @ 50p
SCREEN THRILLS No.7 @ 50p

MAGAZINES (MARVEL)

SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN 2-4 @50p ea
SAVAGE TALES 4-7 @50p ea, ≠3 @£1.
VAMPIRE TALES 5-8 @ 25p each
DRACULA LIVES 8 @ 25p
DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU 1-6 @25p
TALES OF THE ZOMBIE 4,6,7,10 @25p
HAUNT OF HORROR 1-3 @ 50p each
MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES 4 @ 50p
UNKNOWN WORLDS OF SF 2 @ 50p
MONSTERS UNLEASHED 4,6-8 @ 25p ea

Plus almost 300 different Marvel comics, DCs, EC reprints, etc.

For my next list, send a stamped addressed envelope to this address:

WEIRD FANTASY BOOKSHOP, 3 LEWISHAM WAY, NEW CROSS, LONDON SE 14.

FAN-THINGS

A COLUMN OF FAN NEWS AND FANZINE REVIEWS, CONDUCTED FOR BEMUSING BY ED SALLIS

This column was written on Saturday 5th April, a fortnight after my contribution to Comic Fandom Bulletin ≠3; however, as Rob is having problems getting CFB typed, it seems that Bemusing may come out first. So, let's start by summarizing the major points of the "Fanhunter" column; further details will appear in CFB, I hope, soon.

SPECTRUM is the title of a new fanzine forthcoming from Paul Burton, in the style of FU; to reserve issue 1, send 20p to him

Aided by the TBS crew, Kevan Clarke & co-editor Chris Wiggin plan to bring us UTOPIA this summer; issue 1, a really ambitious effort in the TBS format, can be ordered for 30p from Chris

--but don't expect it to drop through your mail-box for a month or three, as launching a mag like Utopia does need a lot of preparation.

Before I forget, here's the message ol' Bram Stokes wants spread; Dark They Were & Golden Eyed will be closing from Monday to Thursday for a few weeks shortly, while he has a team of builders enlarging the shop. So, before making a pilgrimage to Berwick Street in Soho, it's best to check whether the place is open.

On the subject of shops, I made a trip out to New Cross today to Frank Dobson's new "Weird Fantasy Bookshop" (see his ad opposite). It really is very easy to find, being half-way between New Cross Gate and New Cross, next door to a large pub; Frank had advised me that a 53 bus from Oxford Circus, Piccadilly Circus, or Trafalgar Square would be my best bet, although many more buses go from Elephant & Castle, and indeed the bus stopped just across the way from the pub. The stock of comics, pulps, and related items is large, and much of it is still at cover price; also, Frank tells me he intends to stock as many fanzines as possible, so all editors take note. Anyway it's a nice shop--well worth a visit.

Since I've mentioned the other shops, I had better give Martin's Bookshop (at 17, Rugby St, WC1) and its sister shop, Coram Books (at 58 Coram St, WC1), a mention, as well; I always find some items I want, and Martin (not our entangled editor) is very helpful.

But I'm supposed to mention the latest issues of fanzines in "Fan-Things" (Notice the tie-in with my name in that title? It was Martin's idea, so don't blame me), so here we go:

COMIC MEDIA NEWS ≠19 is still 16p, but Richard Burton warns of a price increase on the way. 3 of the cover repros (2 on the front) were in Bem ≠4, and I'm not listed as a contributor although I'm the EMS who reviewed Panelologist ≠1, but otherwise it is up to standard--the indispensable 'zine for news of comics, British and American.

STARZINE ≠2 runs to 32 pages for 15p, or 20p by post (subs 75p for 4 from Andrew Johnson)
--and as a bonus it includes DAILY STAR, a 12-page newspaper edited by Greg Chown. A promising pair of fanzines, with plenty of good material by the editors, plus Stephen Lines, Rich Morrissey, Martin Lock, Adrian Last, Nigel Long, and N. Barrington. There are two wild strips on the back of Daily Star by Greg; a bit faint, but very funny.

FANTASY UNLIMITED ≠25 is also wild--two zines in one, as "Fantasy Uninhibited" for April 1st starts at the back. There are no articles at all this time unless you count "The Superswipe Interview", which I hope is fiction; instead, 11 pages are devoted to letters on FU's feud with Mike Cruden. I hope the participants to this free-for-all enjoy themselves, but to outsiders I think it has been blown up out of all proportion --why, Starzine gives it 3 pages as well!

Final points; watch for a new ZEPHYR in a few months, type-set; EON soon, with an Emlock review section; PANELOLOGIST, probably out by now; and CFB, with me! --EMS

DC NEWS (continued)

TALES is going monthly. Gerry Conway will take over writing KONG THE UNTAMED. Wrightson's drawing a Batman tale for use in DETECTIVE.

Jose L. Garcia Lopez is a new DC artist, inking covers and stories for Schwartz. He has also completed a Hawkman story.

BLITZKRIEG is a new DC war book, featuring a World War II German pilot - Joe Kubert, Bob Kanigher, and Ric Estrada are involved.

Coram Nobis is revealed to be actually David Reed; he is writing a 2-part Batman story for DETECTIVE. Metamorpho and Plastic Man will team with Batman in BRAVE & BOLD.

Issue 2 of KUNG FU FIGHTER has a fill-in art job by Jim Starlin, Milgrom and Weiss. Wonder Woman rejoins the JLA soon - and, to equal the last Marvel news item, how about Pat Boyette will ink CLAW 3?

CHARLTON NEWS

With VENGEANCE SQUAD 2, Frank Bolle is replaced by "PAM" as artist. DOOMSDAY +1 ≠1, July, has an astronaut team return to a post-atomic war Earth--the story is by Joe Gill, the art by John Byrne.

E-MAN 9, July, has Staton & Cuti's "The Genius Plant"--in the back, Rog-2000 stars once more in "The Wish".

WARREN NEWS

SPIRIT ≠8, June, is the all-villainess issue mentioned, with Eisner illustration, in the Review Section. EERIE ≠66 is the all-EL CID issue, by Budd Lewis and Gonzalo Mayo. CREEPY ≠73 will be a special SF issue, with art by Maroto, Severin, Neary, Corben, and Ortiz - if it sells well, we may see a regular Warren SF magazine yet.

ATLAS/SEABOARD NEWS

The list of titles to be put out in April is as follows:

POLICE ACTION ≠3 (June)
WULF THE BARBARIAN ≠3 (July)
BLAZING BATTLE TALES ≠1 (Aug)
THE BARBARIANS ≠1 (June)
TIGER-MAN ≠2 (June)
FRIGHT ≠1 (June)
HANDS OF THE DRAGON ≠1 (June)
THE SCORPION ≠3 (June)
THE GRIM GHOST ≠3 (June)
TALES OF EVIL ≠3 (June)
THE BRUTE ≠3 (July)
THE COUGAR ≠2 (June)

Blazing Battle Tales (Sgt Hawk), the Scorpion, the Grim Ghost are last issues. The Barbarians features Iron Jaw by Gary Friedrich and Pablo Marcos, plus "Andrax" written by Steve Skeates and drawn by a surprise artist. Fright has the origin of Son of Dracula, by Friedrich & Frank Thorne; Hands of the Dragon features a super-hero with powerpacked hands, by Ed Fedory and Jim Craig. Tales of Evil has the origin of Man-Monster, plus a Bog Beast story.

CHANGES

SAVAGE COMBAT TALES is discontinued after ≠4. A new mag will be DEMON HUNTER by Dave Kraft & Rich Buckler, who did pencils for Man-Monster's 1st outing, and a number of cover drawings, including TARGITT, MORLOCK, WEIRD SUSPENSE, THE BARBARIANS, TALES OF EVIL, & FRIGHT.

Morlock 2001 is now MORLOCK AND THE MIDNIGHT MEN; Steve Ditko has pencilled an issue, which Berni Wrightson will be inking. PHOENIX will undergo major changes, too.

Dave Kraft has replaced Ric Meyers as assistant editor of the Atlas line.

RED CIRCLE NEWS

MADHOUSE is now a humour mag, like "Bats" -- that's all.

REACTION

Send your letters to: Martin Lock.

Dear Martin,

Bem consistently improves, especially now that your TCR subscription has started --however, it seemed to me that "Spidey vs Conman" had too little plot and clarity-- yes, even for a satire of a magazine that isn't known for either!

The FA, unfortunately, didn't have that much in it other than the lettercol, the reviews (including that infamous one of FU) and the ads -- though for an adzine I suppose that's only to be expected. I think personally that FU strikes a fine middle ground--if I'm typical, the writers enjoy writing the articles as much as others enjoy reading them, and it's often interesting to have an overview, with details included that few people remember. Robert Mallory's highly-acclaimed Batmania article, for example -- and I'm even doing an article for Comic Crusader on what Alan termed "the same old stuff about how many times Superman battled Luthor"--but I plan to do it well!

Richard Morrissey.

And I look forward to reading it, Rich. By the way, you're the only writer to comment unfavourably on Dave Weedon's strip - with luck, we'll see his work again in a future issue of Bem. --ML

Dear Martin,

I think your magazine is fabulous. When I read the TBS Sales List I saw your ad for Bem 3, when I got that I got number 1, when I had all the set so far I started reading them. I think Bem-1 was all right, 2 was brilliant, Summer Comics Special was well worth 2p, Bem-3's review about Planet of the Apes was good, and the rest was great. No.4 was brilliant, great and good.

Stephen Bailey.

Who could resist printing a letter like that? But you've got Nigel worried, as you single out his Apes review in Bem-3 for special mention, but say it's only "good" when the rest of the issue was "great"... But thank you for writing, Stephen, and for subscribing to Bem as well. --ML

BITS FROM THE BEMUSED & BEDAZZLED MAILBAG: "I now think your little mag is the best in the country, even better than TBS for news" writes David Knwska of Cardiff, and Dave Bendelow of Consett, County Durham says of Bem-4 "enjoyed very much". Writing from Emsworth in Hampshire, Paul Rose says he's got a complete set of Bem now; "They are one of my favourites in my fanzine collection, I hope they keep on a'coming", he goes on. It's nice to feel wanted! But now, let's go back to America:

Dear Martin,

Thank you for your letter, and also the unexpected pleasure, the copy of Bemusing Magazine. The only other Bemusing I have seen is the one I purchased outside the April, 1974 Con while waiting to enter. That was the last time I was in London. While the news content should not be news to me it usually is. I do not care to buy the US fanzines, because they're hard to find and buy over the counter, and a Sub. guarantees it will arrive late. The Post Office treats printed matter as 16th Class Mail even if it has THIS IS FIRST CLASS MAIL printed all over it.

Brian D. Berke.

Dear Martin,

Well, Bem was up to its usual high standard, I honestly don't know where you get your patience from to lay it out so neatly. It'd send me (even more) crazy to do it. I enjoyed Dave's Spidey vs Conan, I will be running a Kamandi spoof strip in Nameless sometime in the future. Who is Insider? Hmm, he must be somebody close to the fans in London to get that sort of info. I've got it! He's Alan Austin's cat!

One of the best reviews I've seen yet of a fanzine by Ed Sallis, it summed it up nicely. I also noticed that your favourite new word is "pretty". It doesn't mean anything does it? ((pretty little! --ML))

As for the price rise, I'd like to see an extra sheet and a jump to 10p. But, as I hope to get a free contributor's copy, perhaps you think I'm being greedy..

Nigel Edwards.

continued....

Who are you trying to fool? You live in Hornsea, North Humberside, Nigel, and don't you forget it! --ML

Dear Martin,

Just received Bemusing 3&4, and I would like to congratulate you on such a good job. They were the most enjoyable fanzines I have read up to now, also the most professional. Being a serious collector for not so long, other fanzines I have found only useful for the adverts, but I found your two offerings compulsive reading and very informative. I still have issue five owing to me, but you can expect me to subscribe as long as you keep going, which I hope is a very long time.

Anyway, enough of the praise. As I have said, I only started collecting seriously in recent months, although I have collected and read comics for a long time. Whilst reading your mags, I read a lot of names which have cropped up in other zines. There seems to be an elite of Big Name collector/dealers; are there any addresses you could supply me with to correspond or buy from? This includes anyone in America, I am interested in corresponding with someone over there who is into comics.

Alan R. Cookson.

We're printing your full address so that Bem readers can write to you, Alan. Now, Bemused Ones, there's an offer you can't refuse--Alan's 24, married, likes music & Hi-Fi, and is a big Jack Kirby fan; he can write an interesting letter, too, so get in touch, why don't you? --ML

"Bemusing was a gem this month", commented George Barnett of TBS, while Peter Coyle of Formby, Lancashire called it a "great fanzine". Martin Cohen of Cheshunt, Herts, suggested "Why don't you do an article on Potty Time, as my loo has broken down"--thanks, Martin, we needed that.

Dear Martin,

I read your plea for letters and thought a slightly twisted quote from Stan Lee would be apt, "Yea verily throughout the World of Fandom Incarnate we read your plea and we shall reply we must reply"--remember that one, no? I thought not.

On the whole, your 'zine is quite enjoyable, most of the reviews are well written although some seem a bit too long. One point I'd like to raise is that you review quite a few comix unavailable to the average fan/collector (me included) especially the Giant-Size Marvels which can be had at import shops but at 50p a go! (phew!) But nevertheless it was nice knowing what we missed.

If you put more news, addresses of shops and dealers, etc, a bit less reviews, and more humour (am I being selfish?) you have definitely got something going.

Good Luck!

Kevin O'Donnell.

Thanks,Kevin. We may be a little short of Bem-style humour this time, but otherwise, we're aiming to please, with Bem-4's 'zine directory hugely expanded. We'll try, with the reviews, to spotlight the Marvels that do come over more. But, with the black and whites especially, who knows what'll come?

Gary Bentley of Accrington says he buys 10 fanzines a month, "and there's only FU that's a little better" -- what can I say? Alan Austin of Clapton, responding to the unfair things said about him last time in the "Insider" piece, writes that the whole idea of the Price Guide "was to basically help comic fans -- save them some money by not being ripped off". And Marc Evans of Swansea asks why, when the Silver Surfer topped the Foom poll for a new strip and the X-Men came third, it's the X-Men who actually get a new book. We're not sure, Marc--but apparently Stan Lee doesn't want to let anyone but him write the Surfer's stories, and he hasn't any time for doing scripts these days. Also, he wants to wait until Jack Kirby returns to Marvel...

And that about wraps up our bumper 2-page lettercol; Kevin O'Donnell, Brian D Berke, Stephen Bailey, Alan R Cookson, and--heck, why not -- Martin Cohen get free copies of Bem for their contributions. And next time it could be your turn to help me to edit Bem -- B&B hearing from you?

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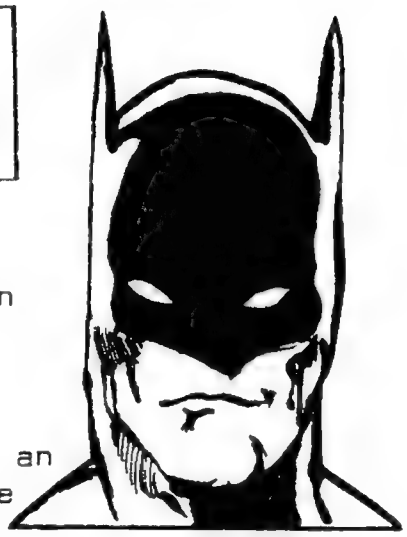
Review Section



SUPERBOY STARRING THE LEGION 207 (Mar)
"The Rookie Who Betrayed the Legion"
& "Lightning Lad's Day of Dread" by
Cary Bates and Mike Grell

Richard Burton admitted in Comic Media News ≠17 that he was a secret, long-time Legion freak, and I'll do the same here. I have always liked the LSH, since I was about eight, when about 20 heroes in one mag was real value! Those stories had poor John Forte artwork, but they had, and they still have, a certain charm; it was nice to think that so many people could get along together so well as a team.

Those were good days, and it's fine to know that they are returning with people like Bates and Shooter. The main story here even reads like an old Ed Hamilton tale--the hero in their midst who betrays them, helping the villain escape--but, do not worry, everybody, it all turns out all right in the end. I'd tell you how, but secret, long-time, Legion freaks will know already. The rest of you will have to buy it, and see. We Legion freaks have strange ways of getting our own back on those who once laughed at us. --Nigel Edwards

STAR SPANGLED WAR STORIES ≠185 (March)
"The Hero" by Michelinie & Talaoc

While not as good as the excellent "1,000 to 1" in No.183, this is however a fine story. The strip has turned from the usual Sgt Rock type of format into a very sad, ironic series--and I'm all in favour. The plot this time round is that a British surgeon has to be rescued from a Nazi concentration camp, but the Soldier finds that, to quote, "some heroes are better off as martyrs". This title is not only DC's most improved comic, it is also the best war comic on the stands.

The back-up story is good, but nowt special (a bit of Yorkshire slang, there), and I'd prefer to see an extended lead feature, or a second tale starring the Soldier -- whatever happened to the days when a comic used to have 2 or 3 stories about the lead hero, anyway? --NPE

STALKER ≠1 (July)
"Quest for a Stolen
Soul" by Levitz,
Ditko, & Wood

Joe Orlando needed an extra magazine, so he gave Paul Levitz the task of creating one; and it's really not bad at all, judging from the first issue. Steve Ditko's pencils recreated the pseudo mediaeval atmosphere nicely; Wally Wood's inks do their job, but aren't as much of an asset as on the Atlas DESTRUCTOR 1. But the story's the thing; like most premier issues, it promises more than it delivers, but the idea of a youngster desperately selling his soul to a demon-god in return for unbeatable fighting skills would seem to be a good starting-point. And, when the newly-named "Stalker" finds that, because of his inner emotiness, he can't feel any emotions, and decides that he wants to get his soul back...issue one ends.

A sword & sorcery title set in a never-never Middle Ages makes a change from all those barbarians. I wish it luck. --ML

ACTION COMICS ≠445 (March)
"Count Ten, Superman--and Die" by
Bates, Swan, & Schaffenberger, plus
"Find Black Canary, Dead...or Alive"
by Elliot S. Maggin & Mike Grell

Superman will never win any Shazam awards, but then again who wants to, if you have to pay for the darned things? Anyway, to quote Our Eloquent Editor ((who dat?--ML)) from good old Bemusing-3, "his stories are always entertaining". That they are, and this issue is no exception, with the all-time losers, the Superman Revenge Squad, returning and once again failing miserably to destroy Supes. Also along for the ride is Green Arrow (plus friend) in the back-up slot; again, it's a fast, easy-flowing story.

In all, a nice, and interesting, comic; it proves that Action has got what it takes to be around for a helluva long time to come. --Nigel Edwards

TARGITT ≠1 (March) - Atlas
"Boston Tea Party" by Duffy, Rovin, Meyers, & Nostrand

A hero in the Paul Ernst "Avenger" mold -- the latter word being most appropriate for this comic. The hero, John Targitt, is much too shallow at the present moment; he is supposed to be heartbroken, and seeking revenge on the mob for the murder of his wife and daughter, but he doesn't look it, he comes on like Kojak or Ironside, just a man doing his job.

The story's nothing to write home about either; Targitt makes a drugs bust, that's it. The mag ends with Targitt throwing the drugs money overboard from a ship in self-righteous pathos -- I feel the same way about the hard-earned (well, almost) 10p I coughed up for the comic. --Nigel Edwards

THE INCREDIBLE HULK ≠187 (May)
"There's a Gremlin in the Works" by Len Wein, Herb Trimpe, & Joe Staton

Nigel always has problems when he has to review ol' Greenskin's mag, so Martin asked me to do the job this time -- why he doesn't do it himself, I don't know--it's perfectly safe...I suppose.

The story? Uhh..."Hulk got message for Emblock--he still not got free copy of Bem for review he do in ish 3. If not get one soon, he write heavy letter of comment..." The story's up to the Wein standard, and the art is Trimpe's "Kirby with care" sort of thing, as a squad of the Gremlin's super-soldiers manage to down Hulky, in time for Ross, and long-time SHIELD agent Clay Quartermain, to get into big trouble. A routine job--but okay. --Jonn Hay

KAMANDI ≠28 (April)
by Jack Kirby & D. Bruce Berry

Not bad, that's the feeling one gets on reading a Kirby comic these days. I cannot really get interested in his stuff anymore --not like those early Jimmy Olsen issues.

Kamandi just doesn't seem to be going anyplace; if you're a Kirby fan, I'm sorry -- if you can get something out of this comic, all well and good. The only thing that interested me in this comic was a German bulldog saying "Das Schwein need a taste of iron discipline" when he saw Ben Boxer and Kamandi. Perhaps Kirby needs something like that too. --Nigel Edwards

SPIRIT ≠7 (April) - ₰1.25
"The Big Sneeze Caper", "Hoagy the Yogi" I & II, "Cheap is Cheap", "Young Dr Ebony", "A Moment of Destiny", "The Explorer", and "A Prisoner of Love" by Will Eisner

For a dollar and 25 cents, this Warren magazine gives 56 pages of Eisner art, 7 in full colour, reprinted from 1946-49, plus a new Eisner/Kelly cover. With any lesser artist, this would be expensive--but with Will Eisner, it's a bargain.

This is a special issue, featuring the Spirit's young friend and sidekick, Ebony; now that's a nice idea for a start, giving these issues themes, they plan to devote an issue to the Spirit's most memorable villainesses soon as well...

But I'm sometimes not too happy about Ebony; in lesser hands, he could become a caricature. Will Eisner, though, is one of the great comics creators, and he knows how to handle his characters. His effects may not succeed every time -- but too many artists and writers never make an attempt, so even failed Spirit tales are refreshing after a diet of weirdos and super-freaks.

We need Denny Colt, the "spirit" who operates out of Wildwood Cemetery as an adventurer; he shows us something of the scope of comics. I hope this magazine goes on for years. --Ruan Lanihorne

Emlock Tale-Enders

If this was a news column, I'd start by mentioning that Savage Tales and Vampire Tales are cancelled; if a column reviewing British publications, I'd recommend WORLD OF HORROR for its intelligent coverage of new horror and SF films, and artwork by no less than Kevin O'Neill and Jim Pitts. And if this page covered fanzines, I'd say THE AMAZING WORLD OF DC COMICS ≠3 is excellent -- the article on Julius Schwartz was most interesting, in particular. But no, this is the regular canter through the latest available comics, so off we go.

Let's start with Marvel, and the May GIANT-SIZE MAN-THING, since it was cover-featured on Bem-4. The Brunner cover is a striking one (it turned up on the cover of the latest CM News, as well), and the art inside on "The Kid's Night Out", while by the unpromising team of Hannigan, Wilson & Springer, is okay--story by Steve Gerber--natch. That takes up 30 pages, including 5 pages of illustrated text; the back nine pages contain Ditko and Maneely reprints. And in between is the new 9-pager starring Howard the Duck, "Frog Death" by Gerber & Brunner, the main attraction - a new kind of "funny animal" tale, splendid.

CONAN ≠51 (June) concludes the serial of the Conjurer's Curse; Roy T, John B, & Dick G are responsible. I've seen better Conan art, but let's hope this issue gets into the country somehow, through one of those mysterious warehouses that gets hold of ballast copies. I'm afraid that's the only way we're likely to see any number of the Marvels I review this time; I've run out of the ones we do receive, reviewing for Starzine, Panelologist, etc.

MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE ≠9 (May) features the Thing and Thor, not Iron Fist as announced previously. Gerber plot, Claremont script, Giella inks, and pencils by Trimpe; very good pencils too, as the Puppet-Master has another try at revenge on ol' Blue-Eyes.

SPIDER-MAN ≠144 (May) has been heavily plugged as THE Spidey tale of the year--it certainly is unusual, as Conway, Andru, & Giacoia & Hunt present to us "The Delusion Conspiracy", as Cyclone holds most of our favourite supporting cast prisoner. For a climax, we certainly do have something to gasp, yell, and faint over--don't worry, I don't plan to spoil it for you.

GIANT-SIZE SUPER-VILLAIN TEAM-UP ≠2 for June has a 32-page new story teaming Namor and the Monarch of Latveria, plus the 17-page "The Living Brain" from Spider-Man 8. Roy Thomas wrote the Doc Doom/Sub-Mariner story; Sam Grainger inked it; the trouble is, Mike Sekowsky did the pencils. One of Doom's old adversaries from his stay in Astonishing Tales returns, re-named and with new powers and friends; a good story, but Sekowsky isn't the right artist.

TOMB OF DRACULA ≠32 (May) is by Colan, Palmer, and Wolfman; Marvel's moodiest mag is up to standard. And the weirdest one of the crop, WAR IS HELL ≠13 (June), by Chris Claremont and Herb Trimpe, is interesting, too; gloated over by death, John Kowalski inhabits the bodies of doomed people up to their death - cheerful it isn't, but, like DC's Unknown Soldier, it's advancing the war comic towards adulthood.

GIANT-SIZE CONAN ≠4 (June) contains the next 30 pages of "Hour of the Dragon", by Thomas, Kane, and Springer & Colletta, plus "The Lurker Within" from Conan ≠7, one of the rarest issues in this country. So, the mag is well worth 50p - I just hope one of the main air-base importers doesn't put it up to a rip-off 75p, or even a pound.

On the black & white front, number one, May, of KULL AND THE BARBARIANS will be worth your attention, if you see a copy with a 20p sticker in a month or so; the cover by Michael Whelan is new, as are two pages of Neal Adams art -- Kull and Brule, Red Sonja, Bran Mak Morn, and Solomon Kane --for the editorial. The rest is reprint--Kull ≠1 & ≠2, plus, from the third issue of Supernatural Thrillers, "The Valley of the Worm"--but all rare in this country.

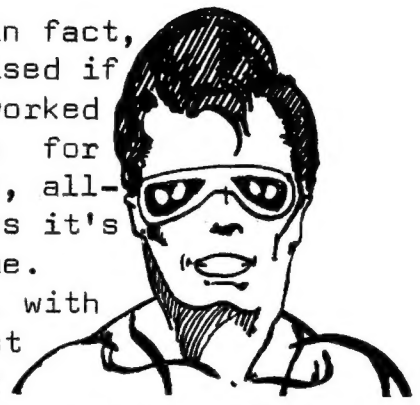
Finally, Marvel-wise, DRACULA LIVES ≠12 (May) has "Parchments of the Damned" with story by Moench and art by Trinidad, a 31-page Dracula story, plus 10 pages by Gerry Conway and Tom Sutton, "The Sins of the Fathers". Only 41 pages of art, then, but Doug Moench contributes an interesting bio of Christopher Lee, taking up 5 pages.

Warren's VAMPIRELLA ≠41 (April) has 58 pages of story for a dollar (50p at Dark They Were...); the lady from Drakulon runs into a mortician and a dog-food maker in a cemetery one night, courtesy of Leopold Sanchez, artist, and Flaxman Loew, author; Gerry Boudreau and Esteban Maroto bring us an 8-page Dracula story that should have been in colour; and there's a 20-page tale of "The House on the Sea" by Jim Stenstrum & Aureleon, plus contributions by Ortiz & Fernandez, and a cover of Vampi by Enrich. Like issue 69, CREEPY ≠70 (April) has six Edgar Allan Poe tales adapted for comics by Rich Margopoulos; this time it's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue", "The Cask of Amontillado", "Man of the Crowd","Shadow", "Descent into the Maelström", & "Berenice" with art by Ortiz, Salvador, Bermejo, Rich Corben, Abellan, & Mones respectively. The cover, well done but blood-thirsty, is by Ken Kelly; all in all, an interesting mag.

Across at National, KONG THE UNTAMED ≠1 (July) has a sub-standard but striking bit of Wrightson art as front cover, with the interior art well done by Alfred Alcala. I even liked the Jack Oleck script; the saga of a young outcast caveman is off to a good start. Apparently, it was either this or revive Anthro to cash in on the rash of TV shows based on pre-history.

SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE, our token Joe Orlando mystery book, has Abel, Oleck, and Cruz tell of "A Dead Man" who wasn't; Cain comes next, assisted by Kashdan and Draut, with "Two Can Play at Treachery", while Destiny, Pellowski, Kanigher, and Tony De Zuniga give us "Burn Witch, Burn". I think Orlando's starting to believe in his nutty hosts...or are they now believing in him?

TARZAN ≠236 (April) has a full 18 pages of art for "The Jungle" by Franc Reyes, a Philippine artist; his work is very much like Joe Kubert's; in fact, I wouldn't be surprised if the editor hadn't worked on some of the panels for this tale of non-stop, all-out jungle action, as it's an above-average issue.



SHADOW ≠11 (July), with The Avenger as a guest star, has E. R. Cruz art, and Michael Uslan story. Smitty of Justice, Inc tries to kill the Shadow, and Margo Lane tries to kill the Avenger; soon the two crime-fighters are locked in a life-or-death struggle by a remote light-house. Not until page 13 does the villain, the Shadow's arch-enemy, reveal himself... A less complex issue than some, but still an above-average issue of a superior book.

BEOWULF ≠2 (July) may be confusing for us ignorant types who don't know America's favourite epic poem, but for swords and devilry, with Beowulf and his followers confronting Satan himself, it's out of all worlds; the script may not be perfect, but Villamonte's art is spectacular.

At Atlas, DESTRUCTOR ≠3 (June) has art by Ditko only--no Wood inks this time. But Sturdy Steve has thrown off the torpor of the last five or six years, and turns in a top-class job, as Jay Hunter falls "In the Hands of the Huntress". And, after delays, SCORPION ≠2 (May) finally appeared, with Howie Chaykin assisted by Berni Wrightson, Mike Kaluta, Walt Simonson, and others. It certainly is a nice job; it's a pity that the cover's only by Colon.

And, pausing only to report that poor old Shadow seems to have had his magazine cancelled again*; that wraps up this column, and this issue, so it's time for the Bem team to ride off into the sunset.

But we will be back -- in two months!

THE BEMUSING MAGAZINE FANZINE DIRECTORY, PART II...

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* And also, Kirby's books for Marvel are announced: Thor, FF, and Captain America.

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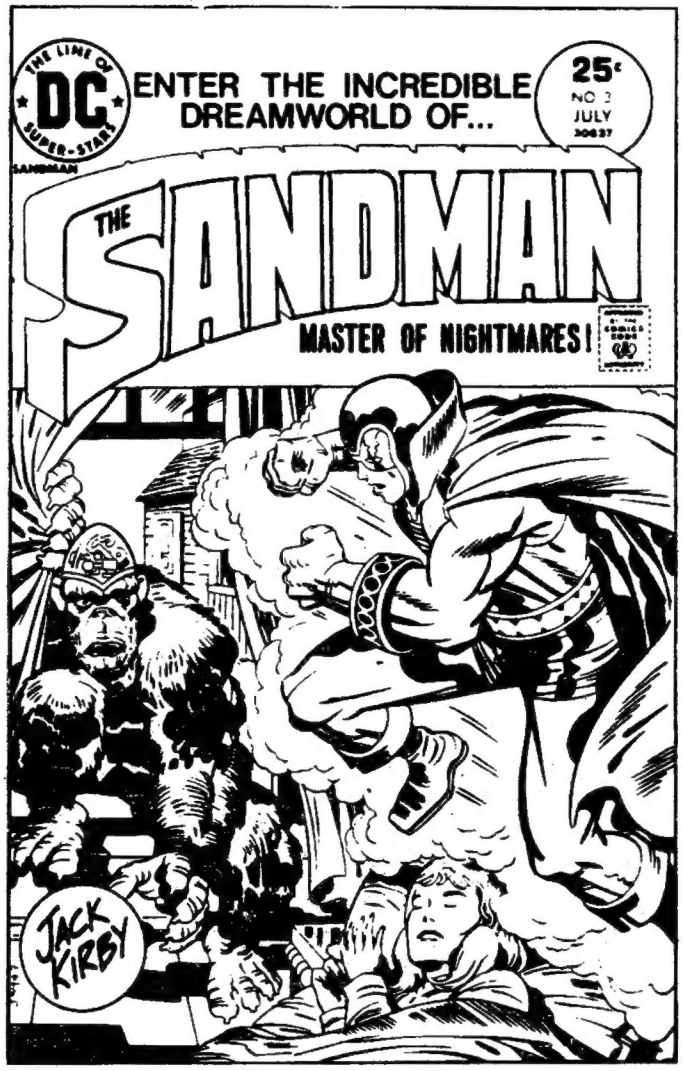

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